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DEPARTMENT PASS TO USAID

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [UG](#)

SUBJECT: NRM WINS CONTROVERSIAL EASTERN REGION BY-ELECTIONS

¶1. (U) Summary. The ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party won two district seats in eastern Uganda but lost another in the first by-elections held under a multiparty system. Despite President Museveni's active campaigning, there was a low voter turnout of less than 50 percent of registered voters in the hotly contested Kamuli district. International and Ugandan election observers in Kamuli said there were anomalies which made the integrity of the results questionable. FDC rejected the Kamuli results and vowed to petition the courts. A total of 62 persons, alleged to be FDC supporters, were arrested and charged with conspiracy to incite violence and to disrupt the elections. End Summary.

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Low Voter Turnout  
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¶2. (U) On May 10, by-elections were held in the three eastern Ugandan districts of Kamuli, Bududa and Pallisa. The NRM candidate in Kamuli, Stephen Mubiru narrowly defeated Proscovia Salama Musumba, the heavy favorite and FDC's Vice President. Mubiru polled 46,322 (47.3 percent) votes against FDC's Musumba who polled 44,444 (45.4 percent) votes. In the newly created district of Bududa, Wilson Watira, the NRM candidate, defeated two independent contenders, polling 18,471 (61.5 percent) votes. The NRM suffered a setback in Pallisa District, where independent candidate Issa Bantalib Taligoola, polled 70,891 votes (70 percent) against NRM's Patrick Mutono, who polled 30,335 votes (30 percent) votes. The voter turnout of registered voters in Kamuli was less than 50 percent; in Pallisa 60 percent, while in the newly created Budada district turnout was 70 percent.

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Monitors Cite Anomalies in Kamuli by-election  
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¶3. (U) Election monitors from the Ugandan Democracy Monitoring Group (DEMGGroup) said the elections in Kamuli were peaceful, but found anomalies which made the integrity of the results questionable. The DEMGGroup report released on May 14 cited a number of anomalies including arbitrary arrests of FDC supporters, supervisors and monitors which caused unnecessary tension during the exercise and alteration of election results. The report also noted that road blocks intended to weed out people who did not reside in Kamuli District infringed on the right of movement, and could have intimidated some voters not to vote.

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FDC Rejects Kamuli Results  
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¶4. (U) The FDC disputed results from ten polling stations in Kamuli and vowed to petition the courts, citing malpractice and the involvement of President Museveni, who camped in the district for 10 days prior to the elections. The party also claimed the Electoral Commission set up non-gazetted polling stations.

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COMMENT  
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15. (U) Busoga region in eastern Uganda has traditionally been a stronghold of the NRM, which explains why Museveni took a personal interest to campaign for NRM candidates. FDC's Musumba was a "favorite" of the electorate because she stood above NRM's political divisions in the district's leadership. Although she lost the race, Musumba remains a political force to be reckoned with in the district. The outcome of the by-elections suggests that Busoga region is going to be a hotly contested territory between NRM and FDC as we move towards the 2011 elections.  
CHRITTON